

1. *great cups of tea*

i'm passionate about steeping great cups of tea
and picking the harvest in the morning,
gathering red-faced babies in the hammock of my skirt,
my bottom turned up for the diseased flies to stick their noses into

i've got weak legs for the sun and i sit before him
like his radiance is the breath that rushes
into my passageways and the fruits stacking in my belly, too:
all the energy i steal is mine and has always been

i sweat at the sight of the trees whilst in their dance
they move and shake, a subtle, sleep-like trance in the rain
— everything is rhythmic here,
everything is perfect
everything makes sense

the magic happens

and while it does its unpracticed thing ,

i wait for the sky to open up
i wait for a ballad to profess its score over my head
and for nature to prove its fidelity
i wait for the burst of warmth in my groin
and for my eyes to roll inward
and all the light to cast aqua shades of jazz-tune cool
over the ridges, the tops of houses, where the land
meets the water and the people face their fears

i wait to devote to something beyond the act of waking
and loving the emptiness of each new day

for my mystification of existence to turn into a realness,
a relic i can read to my unborn children
and slip into the hands of friends
until the last sip of every cup is gone
and we become dizzy
and give up on wondering why the world spins

and then, simply, i could live
passionless.

2. *love*

i can't get that word
you said
out of my head

ringing like old heartache does

stinging like a slap
to the bare wet back

i said i needed space
for my victorious breath

i needed to gaze
into the smokey quartz
to see if the haze got clearer

but really what i wanted
was for you to say that word,
say it again
and again

3. *good riddance*

eating the carp whole
and expecting not to find the bones:

is like the writer without his booze,
his coffee and cigarettes
when he goes to lay his story
in the paper tombs

it's routine without
the ritual,
without addiction
so the day may come as it goes

it's the nightingales
in the sunlight
and the lark silhouettes
in the moonbeams,
nature's tricksters
making us not so sure

it's confusing
your lefts and rights,
but always managing to sleep
where there's warmth

it's a serious man
without a black shirt,
the book of poems
by the bedside,
the stove that barely works

it's like the helpless
with no hope,
or the hopeful
when it's doomed

it's taking the longest drag
that should blacken the lungs,
but it empowers
the stamina and shortens
the miles to go

it's something like me,
it's something like you
— and each missing the other

it's thinking you know better
than the great proverbs, like
love is a foolish thing
and time waits for no one

it's letting the glass fall,
when you'd rather admire its shine

it might be that everything
is already in shards

but piecing them together
makes for a good telling

and even better
when the proof
is in the scars

4. *balasana (child's pose)*

a woman carries a burden
no man or child knows.

she carries it in her hips,
an emotion

a longing the length unfurled
of the lined rings in trees

she carries it
in sex
with his intent
in between

and through her lovers,
she carries it further
and resists that it sag down
or topple out

she notices it
when walking,
stubborn and obese

by the way others call out
and stalk or gaze
and fade away

then she drags it
through conception
the largest widening

making room for
another in pain

she carries it
in her baby's cry
and her daddy's pride

and it only rests
knees to chest
in the privacy
of the couch corner
or the bathroom sink

it funnels
to the crease of the paused book
when she's done
being a woman for the day

when she can release
the emotion,
shrinking slender into
the not-yet-heavy
narrow flanks of a girl

even alone,
the burden of a woman
is not hers

but of everyone she had loved
that day, that year
in all times, both
the fruitful delivering
and the arrival unheard

5. *we met on facebook*

of all the places we could have conspired:

I imagine 2 am in a New Jersey diner,
the five-layer cakes and fruit pies
rotating in their cases
my eyes tripped wide
fixated on your muscular ass
in a relaxed pair of classic-blue jeans as
you walk in circles
an unraveled smog of black cotton
unwilling to admit you're lost,
then finally
you ask a waitress for the bathroom

you pass my table and
our smells mix nice together,
my fingertips sticky from marijuana and
you soaked sour from a fight that
you almost won

I'm with friends, but they're all disinterested
poking at their phones to this week's flings

I order a green tea with extra honey
and a bowl of french onion soup
I take off my jacket
and pull at the hem of my shirt,
dressed with no one to impress, but
I want you, stranger
to notice that I do have a figure underneath
this oversized-band-groupie-tee
I want you to know that I'm not looking, but
I could be looking to be stumbled upon

the men's door swings open,
sparing a glimpse of the urinals, and
you come stomping out,
the gentlest thing I've ever seen

I look at your feet
because books always told me to first judge a man
by his shoes and the good ones usually only wear one practical pair
I look at your head
and your brain is massive,

I could fit my entire stash in your popped skull
and all the crumpled poems, too

I look at your brow
and it's fixed, serious,
a straight-lined temple,
a tightrope I'd like to test

and then,

you look at me looking at you, and
you smile, gingerly, afraid,
as if too much emotion
would taint my first impression of
you and your reasons for being here tonight

you walk back to a booth across from another
grisly dude much taller than you, and

I leave,
the thought of you
left as dust collecting on the jukebox

but it didn't happen like that.

instead, you popped up on my computer screen
one unsuspecting winter day,
a little icon chiming "run away with me"
and I liked the idea of that
the unrealism and romance to it
so I wrote you into my stories

one night, not so many weeks later,
we found ourselves in a New Jersey diner at 2 am,
I ordered green tea with extra honey
you got black coffee and rare steak
and we kept thinking it,
but neither would say it,
thank god for the 21st century.